



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1095

Dave John Cruz-Bustamante

To the Connecticut Senate Education Committee

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My name is Dave John Cruz-Bustamante. I live in New Haven, Connecticut and I work as a political educator with the Connecticut Democratic Socialists of America and I serve as a student representative on the New Haven Board of Education where I proudly represent over 19,000 elementary, middle, and high school students. I **strongly** support SB 1095.

This bill has been brewing for a long time now. Just in this past May, over 700 students walked out of their classrooms in the New Haven Public Schools district to demand the divestment and removal of police officers from our schools *and* increased funding and resource allocation towards repairing our education funding gap, restorative justice counselors and social workers, and additional psychiatric and academic support services. For decades, oppressed communities throughout, not only New Haven or Connecticut but the entire nation have been crying out for justice— to get what we deserve. For good schools, funded schools supported schools; an end to schools that barely claw through the scraps to find enough money for some pencils and a desk.

In my high school, Wilbur Cross, we've had up to four lockdowns this school year where students faced a real risk to their limb and life. In one instance, approximately 8 fights broke out at the same time because there was insufficient staffing to keep the building secure. That, along with the long-brewing resentments and conflicts students have with each other, the pressure they face in going back "home" at the end of the day, culminated into a fever pitch, to say the least. This is

the consequence of continuing the divestment from our schools; continuing the militarization of our school gates; continuing the criminalization of our students, our young people; of people like me. “School resource officers” only respond to a situation when it is too late.

Members of the education committee, our youth are making history in making strides towards a just school system. Now, it’s in your court. Will you be remembered for being co-conspirators or for being another faceless, nameless obstacle overcome?

In solidarity,

Dave John Cruz-Bustamante